ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

INTHE PHILIPPINES, INC

Final Report on the Electronic Connection to Access and Network Information and Knowledge for Governance Effectiveness and Sustainability (ExCHANGES)

Executive Summary

The Association of Schools of Public Administration and Governance (ASPAP) joined the concerted effort to bring the Filipino citizen and the Philippines more fully into the era of e-governance.

Linking Public Ad Schools into Civic Discourse Networks

- The spread of information and communication technology has followed private interests and business interests. It has not quite followed public and collective interests.
- There is a need to bridge another version of the digital divide, where institutions attentive to public interests, issues, and concerns in various localities are not able to discourse on these issues because of distance and isolation.

The Rationale for EXCHANGES

- ASPAP has over 120 member schools that are possibly all connected with their communities but are not effectively connected with one another to start and maintain discourses on national and public issues. As public administration learning institutions, they are only half-effective unless the technology to interconnect them is brought in to make them a truly national organization.
- For this reason the ASPAP in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conceptualized and implemented the ExCHANGES

Project Information and Objectives

ExCHANGES is a two-year project designed to promote and maximize the use of ICT to enable more citizens to participate in governance processes through the establishment of multi-point local resource centers in selected schools of public administration from key regions in the archipelago.

EXCHANGES as a Civic Social Network Infrastructure

- EXCHANGES aims to be the infrastructure for national dialog among selected regional academic hubs that in turn are connected to the key civil society, private sector, and government sector institutions in their localities. Regional hubs will themselves be organizing and sustaining regional dialogues on regional and local issues.
- The idea is to create structured opportunities for citizens all over the country to be informed, interested, and involved in crucial issues such as the trustworthiness of the 2010 Automated Electoral System that we are discussing today. The EXCHANGES is an infrastructure for allowing intelligent debate and learning happen across distance. It is an infrastructure for distance education in public affairs, as well as distance citizenship.

EXCHANGES as a Cyber Network

- EXCHANGES provides basic equipment and facilities to enable the local ICT capabilities of the host universities that serve as regional hubs to be linked together. It enables audiovisual and computer centers or laboratories to talk to one another across the internet. This discourse must not only be intermittent, but a habit, following national and regional schedule of events. That is what EXCHANGES is essentially about. There are other goals, such as the continuing capacitation of public administration institutions, and the upgrading of the competencies of individual professors and practitioners of public administration in the member universities, colleges, and schools.

Project Implementation

Under ExCHANGES, ASPAP organized and managed the following projects from 2009 – 2010.

Activity	Overview	Output
1. Soft Launch of ExCHANGES during the International Day of Democracy	On September 2009, UNDP organized a celebration of the International Day of Democracy. A portion of the whole event was used to pilot-test the interconnection of the six hubs.	The ExCHANGES technology allowed real-time interaction among the participating ASPAP member-institutions based in different parts of the country.
2. Formal Launch of ExCHANGES ICT Hub Network	On November 26, 2009, the ExCHANGES ICT Hub Network was launched, showcasing its multipoint conference capability. Six (6) ASPAP member institutions were linked via internet, participating in a one-day event discussing the dynamics between the Filipino voter and the automated election of May 2010.	1. Successful pilot test of a nationwide e-participation event by the local Hubs implementing an e-dialogue on the country's first automated national elections. 2. The fifth and last keynote presentation was done from Mindanao State University, Marawi City.
3. ASPAP ExCHANGES Assessment Workshop	The Workshop, conducted 29 May 2010, sought to answer the following question: How can the EXCHANGES tools be enhanced to meaningfully realize the main goals of the	The workshop generated a rich number of ideas on what can be done to mainstream the EXCHANGES program into local – based capacity assessment projects. These ideas need to be further processed by ASPAP as a national organization and

	program?	validated with the member-schools concerned in order that the schools can be more fully and directly made part of the processes and accomplishments of the program.
4. Presidential Forum on Integrity and Human Rights	On February 2010, ASPAP convened a forum to assess the stand on human rights of the presidential candidates.	The ExCHANGES technology allowed for a larger audience reach that allowed the messages of the presidential candidates to be more widely appreciated and assessed.
1. Pera't Pulitika Launching Program (February (2010)	On February 2010, the Pera't Pulitika Launching Program was beamed to the ExCHANGES hubs.	The ExCHANGES technology provided a more widespread mechanism to share information.
5. ASPAP – ExCHANGES Participation at the Anti-Corruption Colloquium	**Challenges to Good Governance-Tackling Corruption: Transforming Lives** (Anti-Corruption Colloquium) held last 15-16 July 2010 was organized by the UP-NCPAG with the Philippine Society for Public Administration (PSPA), Philippine Social Science Council (PSSC), Association of Schools of Public Administration, Inc. (ASPAP), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).	The ExCHANGES technology was harnessed in the program to survey the corruption issues from multi-sectoral perspectives. In fact, the half-day participation of ASPAP illustrated a general picture of the efforts of various organizations, national and local, in the campaign to eradicate corruption. It is hoped that this network of anti-corruption organizations will not only continue to grow but more purposively work against the difficult problem of corruption in government.
6. Forum on Social	On September 2010, ASPAP	The ExCHANGES technology provided a

Accountability	joined the Forum on Social Accountability	more widespread mechanism to share information.
7. ASPAP – ExCHANGES Participation at the Youth Summit	The First Public Administration and Youth Summit on Governance on 8-9 October 2010 gathered students and young leaders from all over the country to engage them in promoting responsive governance and accountability and to develop them as future public servants and leaders.	Regional presentations of the workshop conducted by the hubs via multi-point linkages. The participants in each hub had to identify and assess the top 3 national and local governance issues that directly concern/affect the youth sector and to determine how as youth leaders they can help resolve these issues

Dissemination and Transfer of Experience: Local Hubs Experiences

Since the National College of Public Administration and Governance of the University of the Philippines (UP-NCPAG) hosts the Project Management Office of ASPAP, it serves as the central or main hub. Initially, five (5) local Schools of Public Administration were capacitated to serve two main functions:

1. Hubs or Multi-Point Local Resource Centers to mobilize and engage local citizens to participate in governance processes through the use of ICT
2. Repository of e-information and e-knowledge on democratic governance

The local hubs are the South Luzon State University, Lucban, Quezon; Silliman Universiy, Dumaguete City; Western Visayas State University, Iloilo City; Mindanao State University, Marawi City; Western Mindanao State University, Zamboanga City. These hubs established linkages with their respective local government, community e-structures, and other relevant governance actors to organize and facilitate the multi-point local resource centers on governance.

Project Description

Project Overview	Output
South Luzon State University, Lucban, Quezon	
As the hub participated in all national activities of the ASPAP ExCHANGES as well as carried out local projects, the University reasserted itself as the center of free exchange of ideas and issues. The SLSU hub had attained its objective of making it as a venue and platform where ordinary people can express their opinion and ideas and even their own advocacies to make our democracy work in this part of the country. The hub likewise forged a closer relationship among the member schools in the region.	1. Performance Survey of the barangay local chief executives by Public Administration students; an effort greatly appreciated by the residents. 2. Active Environmental Advocacy particularly mangrove protection and rehabilitation of Mt. Banahao. The hub developed and uploaded a video presentation of the aftermath of typhoon Basyang on Mt. Banahao from pictures taken by foresters. This started the "SAVE MT. BAHAHAO MOVEMENT". 3. Regional forum on Human Rights on September 28, 2010.
Silliman University, Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental	
As one of the ExCHANGES Multi-Point Local Resource Center (MLRC) Silliman provides an "easily-accessed" venue for activities that bring people from different sectors to discuss and debate various concerns of the local communities.	1. Best practices shared with the other hubs. 2. Maximize ICT to allow citizens to participate in governance processes. 3. Organize cooperation with the Negros Oriental State University, Foundation University, and St. Paul University – Dumaguete.
West Visayas State University, Iloilo City, Iloilo	
Through ExCHANGES, the university was able to connect to the other five hubs during special events. The purpose of the university in accepting	Under ExCHANGES, the hub hosted a seminar, a lecture series, and a forum. The open forum on e-Governance held in November 2009, was

the hub is to carry out interactive information exchange among other academic communities in the region. Over the last two years the hub has provided access for and enabled participation from the local communities to national, regional, and local conferences.	hosted by the ASPAP-WV chapter in partnership with the MPG students of WVSU. The event was participated by LGUs employees in Region 6 and members, professors and graduate students in various colleges and universities in Iloilo City including NGO representatives. The 5th Lecture Series was on the topic "Towards a Sustainable Local Governance."
Western Mindanao State University, Zamboanga City, Zamboanga	
The ExCHANGES project enhances the electronic governance capabilities of the Western Mindanao State University as a regional academe-based ICT hub for Region IX. Since September 2009, eight academe-based e-forums, online seminars, workshops, and other electronic discussions participated by at least 470 WMSU students (undergraduate and graduate), government and non-government organizations (NGOs) and other ASPAP partners were conducted at the ASPAP-WMSU Hub in Zamboanga City. These online interactions were recorded and posted on the site: http://www.ustream.tv/discovery/live/all?q=ASPAP	Across academic disciplines, eight groups of participants composed of at least 470 faculty, students and representatives of government agencies and NGOs actively participated in various Hub activities and events: The Hub also accommodated the online broadcast and recording of two non-ASPAP activities but conducted by the WMSU-Office of the Vice President for Research, Development and Extension with at least 120 participants: 1. Grant Proposal Writing for WMSU Research Coordinators and other participants 2. Training on Module Writing for Online Courses
Mindanao State University, Marawi City, Lanao del Sur	
The MSU hub participated in all the national activities as well as organized local activities. More than 300 people, mostly students of public administration and from various sectors like NGAs, LGUs, NGOs, business, and the academe,	As the hub participated enthusiastically in all the national events, it was able to organize just one big local activity. On 20 October 2010 the hub organized the Conference on Peace, Development and Federalism. The participants

participated in these events. MSU has successfully connected to the electronic network and both audio and video components were relatively clear. The interactive component of the hub has increased the awareness and understanding of the participants on national issues and local concerns. This process could hopefully lead to consistently effective governance.	numbered more than fifty. These participants were mostly students of public administration, but other sectors were also represented. The conference was a success and obviously raised the awareness of the participants on the various issues surrounding peace and development in Mindanao, as well as the option of federalism. The success of the conference was also made possible through the various efforts of the members of the different committees created by the Dean for the purpose.

Challenges and Solutions

Challenges	Solutions
South Luzon State University	
1. Connectivity - As it is initially connected with the University's internet connection, interference and poor interconnectivity usually causes the hub to be on and off the air during live broadcast. 2. Participation - Unlike ASPAP member schools that are already within a network already established, sectoral representatives must be invited personally and convinced that the activity of the hub will be beneficial to them and to their group. Proximity and distance also posed as problem as the hub would like to cover the provinces within the region. From the initial attendance, a network was thus organized to facilitate connections and contacts for the succeeding activities and to	1. Immediate Solution – Dedicated connection during the multi-point event. 2. Long term solution – Subscription to a broadband internet provider

build trust and confidence among the targeted participants.	
Silliman University	
1. Difficulty of sustaining the interest of the participants. Web conferencing is only good for a smaller audience – a maximum of 25 persons and only if the reception is good. 2. Lack of active participation – most choose to just watch and listen	1. Ensure that the broadband signal is strong and clear. 2. Ensure that the participants even if only a few are truly interested in the forum so that they will not just stay the course but will have some questions. 3. Speakers must be engaging and very knowledgeable.
West Visayas State University	
1. Limited Internet bandwidth. Since the project relies on the University 2Mbps broadband DSL connection the ExCHANGES sessions are conducted while the university offices are also online. This situation results in fluctuating signals. Most notable effect is the significant lag in the video streaming. 2. The teleconference session involves two bandwidth-intensive web applications: Skype for video conference or teleconference and UStream for the video streaming.	1. To mitigate the bandwidth problem, the lowest video settings were selected which improved the quality of the audio so the incoming feed from the other hubs became clearly audible. 2. Limit the live streaming but record the whole proceeding offline. The video recording should be uploaded on the internet specifically on YouTube and ASPAP website.
Western Mindanao State University	
1. The Mindanao power crisis that caused 8-hour daily blackouts from January – July 2010. Moreover, brownouts happened very frequently in Zamboanga City that affected Hub activities and events. As such the programs were maximized while power was available then went offline and proceeded to closing ceremonies when power was out.	1. The Hub ICT facilities were used for other non-ASPAP events conducted by other groups/colleges/centers in the university including the online recording and broadcasting capability. 2. Although the Hub is a library, it has an accordion-type divider which allowed the Hub to be used as venue for ASPAP and

2. Delay in the release of activity budget prompted the project manager to use personal money for the early procurement of supplies and materials, honoraria for personnel, and other necessary expenses.	non-ASPAP-related activities for a maximum capacity of 150 persons.
3. Bandwidth problem of UP-NCPAG caused transmission problems and loss of audio-video quality of the online recordings. Fortunately, the WMSU Hub did not encounter this kind of bandwidth problem.	3. The Hub is also available for online conferences, electronic forums and similar activities by any organizations and groups in the Region. 4. The Hub may also be used for the online recording of classes but this will need better equipment, such as spotlight and at least 2 units of high-definition video-cam/recorders which will be directly connected to the computer for recording.
4. Some faculty members questioned the perceived exclusivity of the ASPAP activities to the college of Public Administration. As a result participants from other colleges in the university were invited.	
Mindanao State University	
1. Technical problem: having sufficient bandwidth for the online audio-video exchange. The College of Public Affairs depends on the university internet server. So far, SmartBro, Globe Tattoo, and Sun Cellular Broadband are not yet reliable for the purposes of ExCHANGES.	1. To address the first challenge, the activities were conducted in the College of Information Technology and access of the other colleges was limited while ExCHANGES was ongoing.
2. Administrative challenge: identifying limited number of participants from a wide pool of potential and interested participants; moving equipment and hardware to the conference site; and getting the cooperation of colleagues and other parties for the endeavor.	2. To solve the second challenge, we solicited the help of the University President, Dr. Macapado Muslim, and the Vice President for Administration and Finance, Mr. Rolly Macalandong. This is to ensure 100% cooperation from the officials of all the colleges and units needed to implement the ExCHANGES projects.

<u>Lessons Learned</u>

1. South Luzon State University

    - Multi-point conferences allow the academic community to engage a multi-sectoral audience. Conducting a multi-perspective discussion among participants from different parts in the country in real time enhances the knowledge development of the academe.
    - ExCHANGES activities, both at the national and local levels, brought the University closer to the local people. Local activities were focused on showing the sensitivity of the university to the problems and aspirations of the different communities. They particularly appreciate the venue to share their opinions and recommendations not only to their town mates but to a larger audience that even includes government representatives.
    - The Hub rotated the hosting of the activities within the Region's ASPAP member schools. Though this process proved to be taxing as it involved transferring the equipment from one venue to another, this gave the other schools a sense of belongingness to the ExCHANGES project.
    - The categorical support and assistance from the different LGUs to various hub activities played a major role in the attainment of the project objectives and goals.
    - The complete support of the University's Administration in providing the venues, facilities, and other necessary equipment that the hub needed to be successful in its various activities contributed largely to the success and growth of the project..

2. Silliman University

    As the hubs had to function as local development catalysts by making information accessible to all, the hubs needed to mobilize participants from different sectors of their respective cities and provinces. Through all the various activities conducted by the Silliman University hub, it became apparent that the following conditions have to be met in order to encourage active and large participation.

    - Allow enough time to plan and prepare for the activities. All the hubs must participate in the planning including choosing the speakers.
    - Specifically for Silliman University, the activity must be within the attention span of the participants – 2 hours maximum, preferably 10AM – 12NN, Tuesday/Thursday as this the

University assembly time. Also, do not hold activities on "closed week" which is a week before prelim, midterm, and final exams.

- ICT system of multi-point local resource centers must be "Class A" condition to ensure that audio/video reception will be excellent.

3. West Visayas State University

- The multi-point conference has effectively surmounted the obstacles of physical distance. Despite the minor annoyance of intermittent connectivity, the lectures delivered at the central hub in Manila were simultaneously viewed by audiences on other locations. Participants in Iloilo were eager to listen to the presidential aspirants as they presented their platform during a key conference session in February 2010.

- ExCHANGES maximized available technology to push forward the primary project objective of enlarging the exchange of ideas and information in real time in archipelagic Philippines. The equipment provided by the project to all the hubs will continue to serve their purpose for multi-point conference beyond the initial two-year phase of the project. However, funding has to be sourced to pay for a more reliable internet service provider.

4. Western Mindanao State University

- ExCHANGES enhanced the ICT and e-governance capabilities of WMSU-CPADS trough the equipment provision and the conduct of e-forums, online seminars, and participation in national multi-point web conferences.
- The project provided a strong platform for improving democratic space for WMSU by engaging the students from across academic disciplines and other sectors in the discussion of political, social, economic, and environmental issues both in the Zamboanga Peninsula region and the whole country.
- The project enhanced awareness on various national and local issues affecting the locality and allowed direct interface with key national personalities and other participants from other parts of the Philippines.
- The project removed geographic barriers to raising awareness and information dissemination. Since a large portion of WMSU's undergraduate students and target beneficiaries come from low-income families, the EXCHANGES activities allowed them to see

and interact with key national personalities and directly learn from the discussions held in Metro Manila.

- A regular subscription to an Internet Service Provider and making the facilities available for use by both students and residents will advance the purpose of the Hub facilities. These improvements will facilitate the use of the Hub for online meetings with other organizations from anywhere in the country and even the world as well as online academic exchanges with foreign students and professors from overseas universities.

5. Mindanao State University

Over-all, the program objectives were achieved. The hub successfully participated in all the ExCHANGES activities with both audio and video elements generally clear and effective. While majority of the hub participants were students (undergraduate and MPA), there were representatives from national government agencies (NGAs), local and regional governments, and non-government organizations. The two-year program increased the awareness of participants on the importance of ICT in the learning process and in effecting good governance among government agencies and officials.

Lessons learned include the following:

- ICT is a critical factor in effective learning and good governance
- To have a successful event, sufficient time, effort and resources must be allocated
- Planning and other preparatory activities must be in place before the implementation of any activity
- All aspects of the activity, both planning stage and implementation, should be documented
- Timely evaluation of each activity is crucial.

<u>Sustainability and Transferability</u>

1. South Luzon State University

The University, specifically the Public Administration Department, maintains the hub as a knowledge and information center. The Hub plans to continue the activities tackling issues and

concerns of the community and the people. The hub can be self-sustainable by charging for its services like internet use for the students and e-conferencing facilities for organizations.

Moreover, the hub can secure the support and assistance from the LGUs by making them part of the project. Also, training Public Administration students to handle the technical side of the project will assure the project of manpower. This process will help in maintaining the hub and help the students earn a modest sum from their part-time work.

2. Silliman University

The hub, through its ICT facilities, enables the participation of more people in governance processes. The hub reaches out to as many LGUs, NGOs, Pos, and schools by broadcasting important information about good governance. The Hub serves as a virtual venue for e-dialogues on local, national, and even global issues. The hub can facilitate advocacy campaigns and can conduct forum on the MDGs, climate change, economic crisis, human rights, gender issues, governance and democracy, and decentralization and development.

Silliman University can sustain this initiative not just through the schools of Public Affairs and Governance (SPAG), but the University in general. The University is equipped with the technology to carry on this project but the hub personnel just have to perfect the process. The best approach would be to reinforce the working relations among the hubs.

Finally, the hub will best serve its purpose if it can be utilize to train the CSOs, NGOs, POs and LGUs to the uses of ICT.

3. West Visayas State University

At WVSU, ExCHANGES project technical management is the responsibility of the Management Information Systems Office. The local ASPAP initiates the events and activities that utilize the resources of the project.

The schools of public administration will continue to hold multi-point events with the technical support of the MIS. Likewise the hub will record local events and make the video available online for viewing by stakeholders at the other hub locations.

4. Western Mindanao State University

The ExCHANGES Project significantly improved WMSU-CPADS's capability for widespread information dissemination and electronic connectivity. As a result, local awareness on various development issues deliberated and discussed in Metro Manila have increased. ExCHANGES expanded WMSU's capacity for electronic participation and enhanced the e-governance capability of the university. Since ASPAP activities are recorded online, the video records of the events and activities can be viewed from anywhere in the world.

Since WMSU's enrolment and student records systems are already done electronically, the equipment given to WMSU-CPADS were also used for electronic access and monitoring of class schedules, enrolment and students' records. To further maximize the ExCHANGES equipment, it was utilized for instructional purposes and other college-related activities.

The sustainability of the Project is doable by making the venue, equipment, and internet access available for paying customers. Since the Hub has developed into a prime venue for forums, workshops, and conferences the hub has become economically viable. In fact, it can also function like an internet café.

The project is replicable especially for schools with existing ICT capability. The internet and electronic connectivity, live video streaming, online broadcasting, and recording are just "value added" to the regular extension function of the university/college to conduct regular seminars, and conferences. This is also part of the annual performance targets of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) as defined in the CHED-mandated "Normative Funding" and the Organizational Performance Indicators Framework (OPIF) required by the Department of Budget and Management.

On the other hand, for schools with inadequate ICT capability for the project to be replicated, ICT equipment and internet subscription have to be procured. The school should also allocate budget for the technology. Experience has shown that location is important in relation to the strength of the bandwidth. Zamboanga City, by chance, is located directly facing the Smart Bro tower, hence, bandwidth has never been a problem with the hub when using Smart Bro prepaid or post-paid internet subscription.

5. Mindanao State University

MSU benefitted from the ExCHANGES Project. For one, other ASPAP-member schools, especially the hubs, have become like neighbors through the electronic highway created by the program. MSU's role as a center of learning in public administration and information technology was boosted with the effective implementation of the project. The teleconferences held were both exciting and educational to the participants, thus providing an additional tool for the university to achieve its goals. The program has afforded an effective medium for sharing of information and ideas which, if sustained, can institutionalize further the use of ICT in the tri-function of the university, namely: instruction, research and extension.

For its sustainability, the College is considering a separate internet server to remove its dependency on the College of Information Technology. The University President has already approved additional security measures for the equipment in terms of iron grills within the room housing them. Training of additional personnel to work with Mr. Marc Joseph Mahinay, the technical point-man for the MSU hub, is in the offing. Aside from the computers and LCD projector already given to the Graduate Department of our college, more equipment will be procured next year.

Finally, MSU plan to share their hub experiences with other public administration schools within the region through the ASPAP Regional Chapter. MSU hopes more schools will be similarly equipped to widen the scope of the ExCHANGES Project. MSU hopes UNDP continues its support for the program through additional equipment and funding.

Conclusions

- The ExCHANGES project should be mainstreamed. To do so, the focus should be to determine problems, gaps, or failures through review of past experiences and systematic research. Once these problems, gaps, or failures have been identified, they can then be the focus of capability building initiatives to address and resolve them.

- To pursue the gains of ExCHANGES, Learning Stations must be established. These stations will serves as e-centers where people from the communities can learn from experts and where

Philippine EXCHANGES best practices can be showcased and explained to study tours participants from the Philippines and other countries.

- ASPAP with partner agencies must implement IEC (Information, Education, Communication) – combines strategies, approaches and methods that enable groups, organizations and communities to play active roles in achieving, protecting and sustaining their own multipoint system

- In the end, the goal is for ASPAP to be known as one of the pioneer institutions that purposively and effectively empowered the Filipino to be a better citizen through the upcoming field of e-governance. The ExCHANGES project is a launch of a small beginning that hopefully other institutions in the national and local arena would take up. ASPAP, in turn, has been an eager partner and collaborator of other institutions that have been promoting good governance.